the State PWD or the maintaining agency and the roads are restored in traffic worthy condition. Government has also initiated the programme for improvement of Riding Quality of existing National Highways since 1999 to supplement maintenance effort. Riding Quality of about 23,000 kms has so far been improved. Riding Quality of the balance length of National Highways is targeted to be improved within the next two years. During the current year the assessment of funds for repairs to National Highways due to flood damages is Rs. 203 crore, against which funds to the tune of Rs. 91 crore could be allocated keeping in view the availability of funds and *inter-se* priority.

The requirement and allocation of funds for maintenance of National Highways during the last three years are as under:

Year	Requirement (Rs. in crores)	Allocation of Funds (Rs. in crores)
2000-2001	1350.00	702.50
2001-2002	2000.00	725.00
2002-2003	2000.00	799.47

Highway connecting four Metros

321. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched some years back a project to link the four metros with four-lane highways;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the project as originally fixed and the time-frame by which it was scheduled to be completed;

(c) the present status of the project;

(d) whether there has been any cost and time overrun and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken to ensure timely completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) Yes, Sir. The project linking the four metros with

four-lane highways is named as Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) and is part of National Highways Development Project (NHDP), being implemented by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

(b) The estimated cost of the Golden Quadrilateral connecting 4 metros was Rs. 25055 crores and targeted for completion by December, 2004. We are now attempting substantial completion by December, 2003.

(c) Total length of Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) is 5846 kms. Present status of GQ is as under:

4-laning completed	— 1159 kms
Under implementation	— 4551 kms
To be awarded	— 136 kms

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Steps taken to ensure timely completion are as under:

(i) the contracts for works provide for bonus for early completion and penalty for delays;

(ii) close monitoring of the projects by NHAI and Ministry;

(iii) speedy completion of pre-construction activities like land acquisition, tree cutting and shifting of utilities;

(iv) speedy-decision making;

(v) prompt payment to contractors; and

(vi) regular interaction jointly with consultants, builders and NHAI at Minister's level.

Golden Quadrilateral Project

322. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Golden Quadrilateral Road Project is progressing as per schedule;